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Reflections on Death,

A
S E R M O N,

Delivered at the OLD-CHAPEL,

Dagger-Lane, HULL,

On SEPTEMBER, 14th, 1794,

By MR. ROBERT GREEN, E. M.

OCCASIONED

By the Death of his beloved Son G. M. GREEN,

S U R G E O N,

Who being engaged in the Service of his King and Country in the present War against the French, in the West-India Settlements: and who, after several Attacks of the malignant Fever, raging in that Part of the World, fell at last a Victim to the same, on the 26th of April last; Aged only 19 Years, 9 Months,

TOGETHER WITH

A Hymn suited to the solemn Subject,

AND ALSO

Well adapted to some Parts of the young Man's Life,

AND LIKEWISE

To the Circumstances of his DEATH;

WITH

Some PIOUS REFLECTIONS also respecting both
TIME AND ETERNITY.

BOTH PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Semel Omnibus calcanda est Via Lethi. HOR.

"The Path of Death must once be trode by All."

KINGSTON upon HULL:

PRINTED BY D. INNES AND A. GRAY, MDCCXCIV.

Nota Bene.

AS I have not now been in the habit for several Years past, of writing down my public Discourses, but only of committing to my Memory such Parts of them, as I judged most essential; and then endeavouring by Meditation to make myself as much Master of the Nature of my Subject as I possibly could. Therefore, having at this Time, to write from my Memory only, some of my more attentive Hearers will, no doubt, recollect some of my expressions at the Time of Delivery, which they will not find in the written Discourse: And, perhaps also they will meet with several others, which were not brought in, when speaking publicly on the Subject. Both these Digressions, I hope, they will readily excuse, especially when they advert to the reasons just now hinted at. And moreover, when they will, no doubt, call to mind, that I have been scrupulously careful, not either to add or to alter *one single Division*, nor scarcely a *Subdivision* throughout the whole Bounds of the Discourse; except only what may consist in a few Observations made in order to a clearer illustration of our solemn Subject.

Note also, I had not even the most distant idea of publishing the Sermon, before I was earnestly solicited for the same, by several of my Friends, whose reasonable requests I ought at all Times readily to grant, and whose sentiments I very highly esteem:



A
S E R M O N,

CONTAINING

REFLECTIONS *on* DEATH.

David said is the Child dead? And they said He is dead. Wherefore then should I fast? Can I bring Him back again? I shall go to Him, but He shall not return again to me. 2 SAM. xii. 19, 23.

Briefly thus—*The Child is Dead, I cannot therefore bring Him back again, I shall go to Him, but He cannot return to me.*

MY DEAR HEARERS,

THE Relation in which I stand to him, on whose Behalf these Words are now read, and peculiarly selected as the Ground of the following Discourse, makes my Task, at the time, an arduous and a difficult one indeed! I have many Times heretofore requested an Interest in your Prayers, on my behalf, and I have also often experienced the happy Effects and Advantage of them: And I perhaps never stood more in Need of them than in my present situation; and therefore I once more earnestly beseech you, that you will be peculiarly solicitous for me at the Throne of Divine Grace. For unless the LORD *Himself* support me both in my present Trouble, and also in the Execution of my present Charge, I must certainly sink under my Burden. I have dreaded the Execution of this Afternoon's Work, almost ever since I received the sorrowful News of my dear Child's Death. But Trusting once more to the great Goodness and tender Mercy of my

ever blessed LORD, I have ventured on his Strength once more, in order to discharge this Task, hard as it is, and which must evidently appear so to be, to every one who is possessed of any tender Feelings, and more especially to Parents, who must surely be supposed to experience some Degree of that Keenness and Strength which is attendant upon parental Affections.

But not to detain you with Preface, I proceed, as the LORD shall assist, to discourse on the present momentous and solemn Subject as it stands now presented to our View. And in further discoursing thereon, I shall endeavour to prosecute, for our Improvement, the following Propositions, viz.

1. Shew a little what Death is.
2. — who are the Subjects of Death.
3. Mention some of the Causes of Death.
4. — some of the Properties of Death.
5. Enforce the Phrases, *I cannot bring Him back again, I must go to Him, but He cannot return to me.* And First

WHAT DEATH IS, OR CONSISTS IN.

To tell positively what Death really is, must appear difficult to all, who are on this side their Passage through that obscure Path. Because we short sighted Mortals have no more true Knowledge of any one thing, than so far as we have Experience in the same. We have seen our Friends, no doubt, passing through the solemn Scene, and going out of this short and transitory State, into the eternal World of Spirits. Yea, we also perhaps have heard their hoarse and sinking Voice, bidding their last and final farewell to us and those left behind them. But we may venture to say, that not one of any of the Friends of those here present, ever returned again; so as to give them any Information of what they met with, either in their passage through Death, or afterwards.

afterwards. So that we must rather attempt to tell one another what Death is, in some of its principal Effects or Properties, than what it is in itself abstractly considered. And in this View we may say in general,

1. *That Death consists in, or may be defined to be a Disunion of the human Soul and Body.* Mankind being made up of these two principal Parts, viz. an immortal never dying Soul, and a mortal transitory Body. Between which, however different their natures may be, yet during the Time of their Union, there subsists a Tie or Bond so strict, that no two Things can be conceived to be in closer Conjunction. This Tie or Bond, which we would call the Influx of Life, being removed or taken away, must always bring about the Disunion of these two constituent Principles; and of consequence Death immediately ensues. Or if taken in a somewhat different View; Death, or a Separation between Soul and Body, will always positively happen, whensoever the Body comes into such a State, from whatever Disease or Accident it may be, that it cannot act as one with its Soul or Spirit. For whensoever this happens their Correspondency will then perish; and along with their Correspondency their Conjunction will be cut off at the same Time. Therefore, at whatever Time the above-mentioned Disunion happens to any one of our Friends, they must then go hence, *We can by no Means bring Them back again, we must go to Them, for they cannot return to us.* The Time will also come, and no doubt, is very near to many of us present, that we must go the same Way. How diligent then ought we to be, so that this truly important Way which can only thus be passed over but once, may be walked along, or troden over in a due and proper Manner. Again,

2. *Death is said to consist in a Dissolution of this earthly Tabernacle:* As in 2 Cor. v. 1. *For we know that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building, &c.* Man's Body is here compared

compared to a Tabernacle, in Allusion to the Tents or Tabernacles which are pitched by Soldiers, when they encamp in open Fields, and which they take down as often as they have occasion to remove, either for Convenience, fear of Disturbance, or other necessary Exigencies. Or, to those Tents which are set up by Shepherds, in some Countries, when tending on their Flocks; and which they remove, as often as occasion requires, from one Station to another, in order to find Pasturage for their Flocks. But to whichever of these Allusions, now hinted at, our inspired Apostle may intend to guide our Views; yet we suppose that it is equally certain from the Scope of the Words, that he means to inform us, both of the Uncertainty, and also of the Shortness of Bodily Life. And more especially since we find the same Phrase, and the same Idea designed to be conveyed by the Words of good King Hezekiah in *Isa. xxxviii. 12. Mine Age is departed and removed from me as, or like, a Shepherd's Tent.*—Remark here also, that when Tents or Tabernacles are taken down or removed, it always happens that there are Pins drawn out, Cords loosed, Pillars taken down, Curtains folded up, &c. See *Numb. iv. 25, 32. Isa. xxxiii. 20. Eccl. 12. 6.* All which Parts of Business respecting Tents or Tabernacles might be easily shewn to bear a most remarkable and peculiar Correspondency, to the Dissolution of the Clay Tabernacle of our bodily Frames; but this for want of Time we must pass by. But whensoever this case happens to any one of our Friends, however near, or however dear, we can by no means rear up this Tabernacle again, *We must go to them, but They cannot return to us.* Again,

3 *Death is signified by a Departure out of this World, as in John xiii. 1. Now came the Feast of the Passover, when JESUS knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this World, and go to the Father, &c. With those who are formed into the Image of their*
LORD,

LORD, and are come into true Union with Him, so as to become real Members of his glorified Body; their Death is only a Departure out of this earthly House, into an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. A Departure from Houses of Clay, and which have their Foundation in the Dust, unto everlasting Habitations, or to Mansions in their heavenly Father's blessed Abode. Hence it is properly termed a Departure *in Peace*, Luke ii. 29. And also an Arrival in Glory, Happiness, and complete Blessedness, as in 2 Tim. iv. 6, &c. Of consequence the Phrase also is denoted by a Loosing from one Port or Haven, and sailing through the Ocean a little, in order to arrive at another. The Port or Haven to which all the LORD's People are bound, is Heaven, even their heavenly and better Country, at which Haven, they all safely arrive, after having passed through the obscure Valley of Death. As Death affords them this happy passage, so Death to all such is no more than going out of one Lodging-Room into another; or than Loosing from one Port, and arriving at another. But all those Images we may find set forth in a much more beautiful Light in the sacred Pages, where the LORD's People are represented as being quietly wafted over the high Swellings of *Jordan*, unto the blessed Shores of *Canaan's* happy Land. To which when they come, they find it to be a Land of inconceivable Joy and everlasting Delight. Hence again, whensoever this Departure out of the present World comes to be accomplished, in the Instance of any of our Friends, We can by no Means stop their Course, nor yet *bring them back again*, We must go to them, for They cannot return to us. Again,

4. Death is expressed by a going the way of all the Earth. As in *Josh. xxiii. 14*. Behold this Day I am going the way of all the Earth. Joshua hereby signifying that he was on that Day to be taken away from this Earth, by his Departure out of it, according to the common

common Method prescribed by Divine Wisdom for the Removal of Mankind from this Life, to that which is to come. See also *1 Kings* ii. 2. and *Luke* xxii. 28. where we find almost the very same Phrases made use of. It is also one of *Seneca's* wise Sayings, viz. "That many have gone before us unto Death, and all the rest must follow after us in due Time." This Idea is likewise expressed by going a Journey; to a Man's long Home; by a going from hence, or from this World; and by a going *whither* we shall not return again. The Way is said to lie through a dark Valley, but God is the Guide of his People therein; who not only guides them in, but also leads them safely through the same, and at last into everlasting Felicity. And this is the Way that all Men of this Earth must go; it is the usual and common Tract. See the *Motto* on the Title Page. It is a common beaten Path, and yet unknown by us; however all must tread it, and not one can avoid it. Hence then when this Journey comes to be performed by any one of our Friends, no matter how sprightly; no matter how young; no matter how strong; they must go, it being impossible to delay or restrain their march, or yet to call them back again, *We must go to them, for They cannot return to us.* Again,

5. *Death is denoted by a returning again to the Dust, and to the Earth, out of which we were originally formed.* As we read in *Eccl.* xii. 7. *Then shall the Dust return to the Earth as it was; and the Spirit to God who gave it.* This being the true Original of Man's Body, to this Origin it must again return, especially since Sin entered. The Body when it dies, is not only turned into Dust, as we find likewise in *Gen.* iii. 19. but it is moreover also turned into Corruption, Rottness and Putrefaction; it therefore becomes highly disgustful even to those, to whom it had been before extremely pleasant and delightful. From hence, even the nearest Friends earnestly desire to have their Dead buried out

out of their Sight. The Body is therefore interred with all convenient Speed, and then it mixes itself with its Mother Dust and Earth, and not long after, it comes to be of the same Nature and Quality, *Psal. civ. 29.* This is certainly an humbling consideration to the Pride of Man, who if he looks to his Original, it is indeed Dust: If he considers himself even in his highest Bloom of Life, his Body is little better than another Heap of Dust. And if he look forward to the last End of his Bodily State, he must find the high Amount to be, even the very Dust of Death. His Honor must in every View, be laid in the Dust; his Memory the same; his Dignity, Splendor, Power, &c. all must go. Hence therefore, when the Time, for any one of our Friends to return to their Mother Dust, comes to be accomplished, however dear, however fair, however honorable, however dignified, however powerful, they must be gone; neither *can We bring Them back again; We must go to Them, but They cannot return to us.* We might here also have observed, that Death is expressed by *Sleeping, Dan. xii. 2. By Resting, Rev. xiv. 13. By Lying down, Job. xiv. 12.* But these with many other Expressions, whereby Death may be either defined or set forth in its Properties or Effects, we shall pass by at the Time, and so proceed to the second general Proposition in our proposed Method, viz.

II. TO SHEW BRIEFLY WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS OF DEATH. This in general may be said to be the Fate of all Men, and scarcely do we find any one ever exempted. And this is according to the Voice of the sacred Records, where we are told, *That it is appointed for (all) Men once to die, and after this to Judgment.* And again it is said that *all Flesh is Grass*; therefore every Man is withering, mortal, dying, yea and actually dies. All have sinned, and of Consequence Death comes upon all Men. We know there are some Excep-

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tions found to this Assertion; but these are so exceedingly rare, that the general Proposition, may be said to hold its proper Ground. But this much, at present, concerning the Subjects of Death in general; now to come to some more particular Observations on this Head. And,

1. *Persons of every Sex die*, whether Male or Female, all become the Subjects of Death. Neither the Strength nor Hardiness of the Male, nor yet the Weakness or Tenderness of the Female, seem to make the least Difference, in any one Point of View, wherein Death is the Subject under Consideration. And although the Female Sex be Subject to almost all the Diseases of the Male, and also to many more Distempers peculiar to their own Sex, yet neither does this seem to make any Difference in Regard to the Number of their Deaths, as is evident, from the slightest View of the Bills of Mortality. And here I cannot well help remarking, what I have often observed with great Wonder and Admiration, and which has led me, and no doubt several others, to see in a peculiar Manner, the All-Guiding and Directing Hand of Providence; and that both in the Formation and Birth of such an equal Proportion of Males and Females, as we find; and that this Equality should be so continually and so strictly preserved in this our World. The Proportion of Males to that of Females being about fifteen to fourteen, and this almost constantly.—The Surplus of Males being allotted for Soldiers, Sailors, and some other dangerous Employments, to which the Female Sex are not well adapted. Still our Maxim will be found true, viz. that Persons of every Sex are equally the Subjects of Death. And,

2. *Persons of every Age die*; young and old, small and great. Some die in early Infancy; some in the Spring of Childhood; others in the Bloom of Youth; some in the Prime of their Days, and in their full Strength;

Strength; and some few die not before they come to be well stricken in Age. However, those who live longest, they all die at last. *Methuselah*, the oldest Man that ever lived, he shared the same Fate with others in this Respect; for it is positively affirmed of him, that *he died*. And no one has any more to do for Information on this Point, than to read over the Account of the ancient Patriarchs, as recorded in *Gen. v. 1, &c.* and he will there find, that at the close of every individual Life, the humbling Conclusion is, that *he died*. Again,

3. *Persons of every Rank die*; whatever be their Condition in Life; high or low, rich or poor, prosperous or wretched; the exalted King, the potent Prince, the mighty Emperor, must each of them die; as well as the poorest, the meanest, the most abject of all their Subjects. In this View, we find *Job* earnestly wishing that he had died as soon as he had been born, then says he, "I had been at Rest with the Kings and Counsellors of the Earth, and the Princes whose Houses had been filled with Gold and Silver." Riches can neither ward off, nor buy off any one from the last Stroke of Death; nor be any, the least Means of Deliverance therefrom. The poor and the rich meet together in the Grave, where they are each upon an equal Footing. Again,

4. *Persons of every Character die*; as well the sage and wise, as the foolish and insane. The Instances are innumerable, and no great Length of Time need to be spent in acquiring complete Information on this Point. Yea, we are informed in the sacred Word, that "the wise Man dies even as the Fool dies." Nay moreover still, *Solomon*, the wisest of the Sons of Men died. Learning in all its Branches, in its deepest Researches, or in its highest Attainments, cannot possibly secure the Possessor from the invincible Arms of Death.—Hence Men learned and unlearned, wise and foolish, prudent and indiscreet, must all come at last to the

same concluding Point, that is, they must all die. Once more,

5. *Persons of every Disposition die*; as well the wicked Profligate, as the most pious Saint, are each equally subjected to Death. Yea, also those who are most abandoned in their wicked Ways, and have as it were, entered into a Covenant with Death and Hell, and are at Agreement with these, as they imagine; yet all their foolish and vain Ideas concerning these Things, must fail them, and they themselves be exposed at last to the dreadful Stroke of this their great and most formidable Enemy. And though they put the evil Day far away, yet it will come upon them suddenly; and whilst perhaps they may be Crying Peace, Peace, and Promising themselves long Life and Prosperity, yet sudden and inevitable Ruin may be just impending over them. Good Men likewise die, and concerning the *Prophets*, it is said *Zech. i. 5 do they live for ever?* No; certainly they do not. Good Men and righteous Men, are often in great Mercy, taken away from the Evil which is to come; and true Believers in the LORD, and such as live in, and believe on Him, shall never die a spiritual Death; nor what is termed in Scripture Language the second Death. But there is no Exemption for Them, no more than for the merest Profligate from a bodily or corporeal Death. But concerning this Point, it must always be kept in View, that though the Good and the Wicked both make a similar Exit out of this World, as far as corporeal Death is concerned; yet their last landing Stations are entirely different, as will evidently appear to any one who consults the *Evangelist Matthew*, Chap. xxv. from Verse 31, and following.

But having thus endeavoured to set before your Views, who they are, who, from plain Evidence, are denominated the proper Subjects of Death, we now proceed

proceed to the Illustration of the next general Proposition in our Method, viz.

III. TO MENTION SOME OF THE CAUSES OF DEATH. And here we are to consider on what Account Death comes upon Man, and to whom, and to what it is to be ascribed.

And in the *First Place* then, God is very peculiarly said to be the *Efficient Cause of Death*, as in *Deut. xxxii. 39.* *1 Sam. ii. 6.* *Psal. civ. 29.* Where we have these Words thus expressed, viz. *The LORD killeth, and also maketh alive; He taketh away their Breath, and they die, and so return to their Dust again.* But this seems to be a Subject, viz. God's *Killing, Slaying, or Taking away Men's Lives*, as recorded in the above, and several other Parts of the sacred Records, which is far from being well understood by the Generality of Mankind, and therefore great Caution ought to be used in Speaking thereon: For, otherwise we must be liable either to take away from the ever blessed God that which may very properly belong to Him, or attribute to Him, that which is by no Means suitable to his glorious Nature or Character. And we suppose it almost impossible to shun the Running into one or other of these Extremes, without a proper Knowledge of the following Things, viz.

1. A distinct Knowledge of the two Terms, God's *Foreknowledge*, and God's *Providence*, what their Difference is, and what each of them has peculiar Respect to, in God's universal Government of all Things.
2. A proper Knowledge of Man's *LIBERTY*, or *Freedom of Will*, and also of his *RATIONALITY*, or the *Faculty of Understanding*; as they are God's Gifts to the human Race; which Gifts are communicated to, and maintained in Man in all States of Life, as well in Eternity, as in Time.
3. A distinct Perception how it comes to be, that
God's

God's *Foreknowledge* and Man's *Free-Will*, never clash with, nor infringe upon one another; not even in the least Matter possible. But as the proper Discussion of each of these Points, would take up whole Discourses, yea, whole Volumes of themselves; we must therefore here pass them by, with only giving a brief, and perhaps a very imperfect Hint on each, as we pass along. And first, with Respect to the two Terms God's *Foreknowledge*, and God's *Providence*. Let it be first observed that the Latin Terms for these two, are *Providentia* and *Providentia* respectively, where we find only the Difference of one Letter between these two Words. But further, it ought to be well observed that *Foreknowledge*, or rather *Forefight*, hath a peculiar Respect to Man; but *Providence* hath Respect unto the LORD; for the LORD *foresaw* from Eternity what the human Race would be, and what would be the peculiar Quality of each Individual of the human Race; and also that Evil would so continually increase with Man, that he would at Length of himself rush Headlong into Hell. On this Account the LORD not only *provided* Means, whereby Mankind (yea every Individual of them) might be turned from Hell, and led to Heaven; but moreover He by his Divine *Providence*, is continually urgent to turn and lead Him thither. Again, as to the universal Exercise of God's *Providence*, this is so continually employed over all Things, that not even the smallest Accident can ever happen or fall out without it; as is certainly evident from our Saviour's Words in *Mat. x. 29, 30.* where he informs us, that not so much as a small Sparrow can fall to the Ground, nor a single Hair of our Heads be moved without his Divine Direction. And as the LORD is Goodness itself, Love itself, and tender Mercy, we ought therefore certainly to believe that he will so continually guide, govern, and dispose all Things, that so that they may turn out for the greatest Good to all his subordinate and dependent Creatures.

Creatures. Again 2d, as to Man's LIBERTY or Freedom of Will, and his RATIONALITY or Faculty of Understanding, being the peculiar Gifts of God to him, and therefore never to be taken from him, we think these to be extremely clear; for God's Gifts are expressly said in Scripture to be without Repentance. Yea moreover, that they are not only given to, and maintained in the human Race, while they are Men in this Life, but also even when they either become Devils in the Regions of Hell, or when they become Angels in the Kingdom of Heaven. The greatest Devil in Hell being as free in his Choice, as the highest Angel in Heaven. In like Manner also, a Devil from Hell will reason as acutely, according to his Perception of Things and Actions, as an Angel from Heaven; and we make no doubt, but that he will quote Scripture as fluently too. This Assertion strange as it may appear to some, yet we judge that it stands grounded upon the most plain, simple and evident Fact, as we suppose any one may clearly perceive, by only Reading the Account of our blessed LORD's Temptations in the Wilderness, as recorded in *Mat. iv. 1, &c.* But some may ask here, wherein (in this Respect) consists the chief Difference between the Angel from Heaven, and the Devil from Hell? Our answer briefly is, that the Angel, in, or from Heaven, sets the Will of God, and the Wisdom of God in the first place in his Affections; and his own Will, and his own Wisdom in the second or last Place. Making the Will of God (as found in the sacred Word) to be his only Rule; and to do all those who are going towards Heaven. But the Devil, in, or from Hell, sets his own Will and his own Wisdom in the first Place, in his Affections; and the Will of God, and the Wisdom of God in the second or last Place; or, rather totally neglects or despises these, as a Rule, for any Part of his Conduct. And hence, however he may at Times make Use of the sacred Scriptures, yet they are all interpreted according

according to his depraved Ideas or Perception of the same. The same Method is followed by all those who are going towards Hell. Again 3d, That the *Foreknowledge of God*, and the *Free Wills* of Men, must by no Means be viewed so as to clash with, or infringe upon one another; because God must absolutely be supposed to see through all Time, and all Transactions therein at one single View, and so to contract all Duration, as if it were, into the present *Now*. Hence He must have seen all Things from Eternity to Eternity, in one single, clear and intuitive Point of View. And yet the *Free-Wills* of his dependent Creatures are not even in the minutest, nor in the least Degree infringed upon. One Reason for this is, because bare Knowledge, in itself considered, of whatever Kind it be, it has no effectual Power to bring about any Action or Event whatever, without some other Means adjoined; and we may certainly know that no Effect ever can happen without its concurring Cause. But for Proof of what is here asserted from the sacred Records, we can only, for want of Time, bring in but two Texts at present, though many more might be adduced, and these Texts stand in *Acts* ii. 23, and *1 Cor.* ii. 8. Where we not only find the *Foreknowledge of God* employed concerning that wonderful Transaction of the Crucifixion of our blessed LORD; but moreover also his determinate Counsel; and yet, an inspired Apostle puts in an *If* here, or what is equal thereto—when he says, “had the Princes of the World but known, *they would not have crucified the LORD of Glory*. Which Expressions, we cannot help thinking, prove in the clearest Manner the above Assertion, viz. that the *Foreknowledge of God*, and the *Free-Wills of Men* do not infringe upon, or clash with one another.

But now having by these Observations trespassed so far upon your Time and Patience, and perhaps in some People's View also, digressed a good deal from our principal

principal Subject; we shall therefore now return to the more immediate Prosecution of that Idea above asserted, viz. that God is peculiarly said to be the *Efficient Cause of Death*. And this will further appear, inasmuch as it is He alone, who is the Sovereign Disposer of both Life and Death: It being He who gives Life and Breath, and all Things, to his dependent Creatures; it is certainly therefore his undoubted Right to call for these again, just as, and when he pleases. And hence in the FIRST PLACE, *Death of Right is God's Prerogative only*. It was He who threatened Mankind with it at first, in Case of Sin; and also adjoined it, at the same Time, as a Sanction to his own Law. Death whenever it comes and attacks Men, it is by Divine Permission from Almighty God. Death is sometimes represented as a Person coming up at our Windows, and into our Palaces and Houses, like a Bailiff to arrest Men. And at other Times, as one on Horseback having warlike Arms, and so invested with Power to kill Men, and to afflict them with various Kinds of Judgments; see *Jer. ix. 21. Ezek. xiv. 21. Rev. vi. 8*. But whatever be the Means of Death to Men, whether ordinary or extraordinary, and though these be brought on by Man himself, yet they are all sovereignly ordered by the Divine Providence of God; and therefore are all under his Guidance and Direction. Every Disorder, Disease, and Sickness, are as Instruments under Him to execute some Part of his Divine Government. And hence it is that Death is so often spoken of as his immediate Act; and as if directly inflicted by Him. Again, we find in the Word, that *Death is appointed by a Statute Law from Heaven*; as in *Heb. ix. 27. The Grave is appointed for all Men living, Job xxx. 19. 23. And the Issues from Death*, and also (in a qualified Sense) the Way leading thereto, *all belong unto our God, Psal. lxxviii. 20*. Hence, in this View, all Things leading to Death, and which issue in the same, are all under the

Divine Direction. All Afflictions, Diseases, or Dis-
tempers, are under the same unerring Rules of the All-
Wise, All-Directing Providence. These are not (as
some may judge them) fortuitous Events; that may
come by Chance, or spring up by Hazard out of the
Dust; but all come as Means under the sovereign Dispen-
sation of Almighty God, to bring about in Mankind
the Mode of their Death and final Dissolution.

2. *The Place of Death is most certainly appointed.*
This may appear with the fullest Evidence to any one,
by only attending a little to what is said concerning the
same in the sacred Records, see *Num.* xx. 25, 26.
where we find particular Orders given by the LORD
Himself, concerning the Place of *Aaron's* Death.—
Mount *Hor*, as we see is the very spot assigned and set
forth by Divine Appointment for the Place where
Aaron was to draw his last breath. Hence we are led to
believe, that *Aaron* must be carried up to this very
Place and die there. Read also *Deut.* xxxii. 49, 50.
where we find in like Manner the peculiar Place ap-
pointed by the LORD, for the Death of *Moses*, that faith-
ful Servant of his God. Mount *Nebo* is the very Place
assigned, by the same Divine Appointment for the
Death of this great and good Man. Now can any one
suppose, (after having read these peculiar Directions
concerning the very Place of *Moses'* Death, and these
Directions also given by the Mouth of God Himself),
but that the Readers must be led to believe, that Mount
Nebo was the only Place assigned for *Moses'* Death, and
that therefore he must absolutely go up there and die.
Read again *1 Kings* xxii. 20, &c. where we find the
the peculiar Place of King *Ahab's* Death, almost as cir-
cumstantially pointed out, as either of the others above
recorded. *Ramoth-Gilead*, is the peculiar Place assigned
here for the Death of this wicked King. In this In-
stance again, we presume to suppose that no one can
well help seeing, that the very Place of *Ahab's* Death is
expressly

expressly designed and set forth by Divine Appointment; and therefore that this wicked King must absolutely go up to this Place and fall there. We may moreover, see in *Jeremiah*, Chap. xii. 26. and Chap. xlii. 16. that great Numbers of the *Jews* were appointed to go into foreign Countries and die there. Once more, certainly we may see, or at least hear, this Truth verified in real Practice, in the Instance (of former as well as) of the present War. We frequently hear of many Thousands falling in one Day, and in one pitched Battle; we need only to suppose here, that the Individuals who make up these Numbers of Thousands, may possibly come from all the different Parts of the known World, and be gathered together by Divine Appointment, and fall nearly in the same Place, and also on the very same Day. From all these Instances, we, for ourselves, rest well assured that the Place of every one's Death is peculiarly assigned by Divine Dispensation and Appointment. And indeed one Text only, if well attended to, would settle this Point beyond all Contradiction; and that is, in *Mat. x. 29, 30.* which Text we have already brought in, and illustrated a little before. If therefore, such seemingly trifling Things as the Fall of a Sparrow, or the Moving of a Hair, be under the peculiar Direction of Divine Providence, how much more the Place of Man's Death.

3. *The Time of Death is absolutely appointed.* This may also appear with clear Evidence, by appealing again to the Divine Oracles. Hence we see *Eccl. iii. 1, 2. To every Thing there is a Season; and a Time to every Purpose under Heaven; a Time to be born, and a Time to die, &c.* where we may see, that there are peculiar appointed Times for Man here on Earth; the Time when he shall come into the World, the Time how long he shall continue therein, and the Time when he shall go out of the same; and before this Time no Man dies: For it is expressly said in *John vii. 30.* that some of

the *Jews* at that Time sought to lay hold on *CHRIST*, and to take away his Life, but it is added that *his Hour was not yet come*. And we presume to say, that this likewise holds good concerning every Man. Neither can any one live longer than his appointed Time.— Hence it is said in *Gen. xlvii. 29. the Time drew near that Israel must die*. The Time here seems to be fixed, and was just at Hand; therefore there could be no going beyond it. See also what is said in *Job xiv. 5. Man's Days are determined, the Number of his Months are with his God, He hath appointed his Bounds that He cannot pass*. Hence our Judgment is, that a Man may as easily add a Cubit to his Stature, as he can add one single Day to his Life.

But an Objector may start up and say, we hear what you say, Sir, with great Attention; and we therefore pray you, not to contradict plain Scripture, as you go on. Only call into your Mind what is said *Psal. lv. 23, viz. that bloody and deceitful (or wicked) Men shall not live out half their Days*. Our Answer to this Objection, briefly is, that this Expression, like many others in the sacred Pages, is spoken according to Appearance, and not according to its nearest or inmost Sense, as perhaps it might appear to some at first View. *These Men*, or any individual Man, might, according to the Strength and Soundness of their Constitutions, have lived a much longer Time than they are found to do: But they themselves by their Intemperance and debauchery bring in Diseases and Disorders into their Constitution, which were not inherent therein; and by the Means of these Distempers, they bring in also inevitable Death, and effectual Dissolution upon their frail mortal Bodies; which might otherwise have been prolonged to a much greater length of Time. For no Effect can possibly happen without its effecting concurring Cause, Intemperance here, in this Instance is the Cause of these Men's sudden Dissolution.

Here

Here also it may be remarked, that the *Devil* is sometimes said to have the *Power of Death*; as in *Heb. ii. 14*. But this must by no means be understood, as if he had Power or Right to afflict Death at his Pleasure on any of the Sons of Men; especially such Power, as, or is in any Degree, similar to that, which we have been attributing to Almighty God, in the foregoing Part of this Discourse. For if any Thing like this could possibly be, such is the Devil's great Malice and rooted Enmity to Mankind, that he would, no Doubt, have rendered extinct their whole Race long ago. But he is only to be considered as a secondary Cause of Death, and this too, by Means of introducing Sin into the World; which indeed is the alone great Cause of Death in all its Kinds. And both these, viz. Sin and Death are properly the Works of the Devil, which Works our Saviour JESUS CHRIST came on Purpose to destroy, and continues still so to do. The Devil in this View is peculiarly said, in *John viii. 44. to be a Murderer from the Beginning.*

It may be also here remarked that no one has a Right to take away his own Life, nor yet that of another, unless forfeited by Law. And with regard to the latter Part of this Remark, we have an express Divine Law made to our Hands concerning the same, in *Gen. ix. 6*. But as to what regards the former Part of it, we rest well assured that JESUS our LORD, the *Prince of Life* alone, He only had Power to dispose of, and lay down his own human Life, and to take it up again. But this Power or Right none besides ever had, or can have. Therefore, *Suicide* is of all Kinds of Murder the most atrocious, and the most execrable. And hence it is, that we have often asserted, that were it possible for Mankind to inflict any Punishment upon a Self-Murderer, they certainly would have contrived for the same, some Kind of Punishment of the most dreadful and formidable Nature.

As we have now illustrated at some Length the *Efficient Cause of Death*, we should next proceed to illustrate some of the other *Causes* thereof, such as the *Meritorious or Procuring Cause of Death*; the *Instrumental or Co-operative Cause* of the same, &c. But as we have now taken up so much of your Time already, on this Article, we shall only touch very slightly upon the *Procuring Cause of Death*, viz. *SIN*; and so pass on to the Illustration of our next Proposition. *SIN* therefore as hinted, that Monster of all other Monsters, is the great, the real, and only procuring Cause of *Death*. *Death* was threatened in case of *Sin*; and when *Sin* entered into our World, *Death* came in by it; *Death* is properly said to be the Wages and Demerit of *Sin*, as in *Rom. vi. 12.* and *Chap. vi. 23.* It is upon the Account of this Monster therefore, that Man's Body becomes mortal and dies. *Sin* moreover is of a Nature so dreadful, so horrible, so deformed, and so ugly, that an inspired Apostle in *Rom. vii. 13.* seems to be at a loss how to set it forth in its real evil Nature and Quality; and therefore as if he could not possibly say any Thing worse concerning it, or call it by a more degrading Epithet, or find a more opprobrious Term to set it forth by—than just to fix on this at last, viz. to call it by its own Name, *SIN*. *Sin* is the procuring Cause of all Evils whatever, that are incident to the human Race. It is the Cause of all Pains, all Diseases, all Sorrows, all Calamities, &c. and at last comes to be the procuring Means of the most humiliating, alarming and formidable State, that Man can meet with on this Side Eternity; that is, *Death*. But here we leave this Point, and proceed to the prosecution of the next general Proposition in our Method; viz.

IV. TO MENTION SOME OF THE PROPERTIES OF *DEATH*. And here we mean only, to set before you some few of those Things, which may serve to lead

us into the proper Nature, Power, and use of Death.
And,

In the first Place, *Death is only to be undergone but once*, as in *Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed for (all) Men once to die, and after this Judgment.* Man originally do but die once, and when they go hence by Death, they go whether they shall not return again. Consequently when they die, they lie down in their Graves, and so appear no more. They go, says the sacred Word, where there is neither Work nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom. All Worldly Work, Device and Wisdom, is for ever laid aside, and for ever forgotten; and a final Farewell bidden to the World, to the Things of the World, and to all transitory Objects. But this is only to be *done once*, there is no returning back, or treading the same Path over again. But here we certainly allow and readily grant, that there have been some few Examples of Men dying and returning into a mortal Life again; and then after this, to have died again. But Examples of this Kind, as already noticed, are so extremely rare, that they are almost none in Comparison. The Widow's Son of *Sarepta*, *Jairus's* Daughter, *Lazarus*, &c. are almost all the Examples that can be truly relied on, out of all the human Race; so that our Maxim above, seems not to be improperly Stated, when it is asserted, that Men ordinarily do but *die once*.

2. *Death is certain.* The above Text, last quoted, will stand good here also, viz. *that it is appointed for (all) Men once to die.* Death is therefore certain. It is certain by the Appointment of Almighty God, which Appointment can by no Means be frustrated. *Israel*, as formerly remarked, *must die*: and so must every Man else; though the Time when, and the Manner how, be extremely uncertain; yet Death certainly will come. In this View our blessed LORD, in *Mat. xxiv. 39, &c.* who there styles Himself the Son of Man, tells us, that
He

He will come in such an Hour as mortal Men know Nothing of; and on this Account He counsels us to give all Diligence to be ready, watching and waiting for his coming. Nothing is more certain than Death, as all Experience testify; and yet Nothing is more uncertain than the Time when a Man shall die: But the Certainty of it should lead all Mankind to be making due Preparation for it.

3. *Death is Mighty, Powerful, and Irresistible.* There is no resisting nor withstanding this special Messenger; and on this Account we find the Question put, in truly emphatic Language, *what is Stronger than Death?* Hence it comes to pass that no Man has Power over his own Spirit to retain it a single moment, whenever the Time comes that it is to be called for. Therefore whensoever God may say concerning any one, *this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee*, It must then be given up. In this View it may be said the *Master is come, and He calleth for thee*, and therefore thou must go. When Death comes and calls for a Man, he must go with him; Struggling, Tears, or Intreaties will all then be to no Purpose. And as the Poet says,

Thus the Foe,
Like a staunch Murd'rer steady to his Purpose,
Pursues the Soul through every Lane of Life,
Nor misses once the Tract, but presses on,
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous Verge,
She bursts at once from this her transient Home.

4. *Death is insatiable:* And hence in *Heb. ii. 5.* and *Prov. xxx. 16.* it is said to be one of those Things which are never satisfied. The Grave which follows after Death, is another of these. And though these two have been glutting themselves almost ever since the Beginning of the World to the present Day, yet they are just now as greedy of their Prey as ever. Though Death at Times, makes such Carnage of Men; as suppose, in a Battle, where Thousands are slain in one Day; and great Numbers also, sometimes in a few Days, taken off
by

by Famine, Contagion or Pestilence ; yet it never says it has enough.

5. *Death is*, likewise said to be, *formidable and dreadful*, especially to wicked Men. And hence, no Doubt, has been derived the common Phrase, viz. *The King of Terrors*; in Reference to this read *Psal. lv. 4. 5.* But to good Men it certainly appears in a very different Point of View.

6. *Death is*, again said to be, *painful and excruciating*: And hence, often in common Language it is stiled *cruel Death*. And so also in Scripture Phraseology, it is expressed by the *Pains of Death*; yea also, by the *raging Pangs of Death*, as in *2 Sam. xxii. 5.*

7. *Death is necessary*: Not only because of Sinners, and because of GOD's *Threatenings* against them; so that both the Truth of GOD, and the Justice of GOD, might thereby be properly accomplished, and so each of these appear in their full Force, and due Form. But also because of *Saints*, and because of GOD's *Promises* made to them; in Order to free them from their Troubles, Trials, and Tribulations in this Life; and also to introduce them into their Father's House, and so to eternal Mansions in Heaven, and the fullest Joy and Enjoyment of their LORD. *Death* being to all such, as already hinted, the only Passage through which the LORD's *sanctified ones* pass out Time into their eternal State of Love, endless Joy, and complete Felicity.—Hence *Death*, by such as these, must be viewed as a real blessing, as a genuine Favor, and as a friendly Messenger.

It only remains now, that we may in the last Place take a short View of the concluding Proposition in our proposed Method, viz.

5. TO ENFORCE THE PHRASE HERE, *I cannot bring Him back again, I must go to Him, for He cannot return to me.* But on this Point I must be exceedingly brief; and that for several Reasons, 1st, Because my Time is al-

most elapsed for being employed in this Exercise. 2d, Because my Feelings come to be extremely keen, especially when the Object to whom my Discourse has peculiar Relation, comes as it were more immediately before my View. And 3d, Because I am afraid of being too much overcome by the Subject Matter, which I must now be more immediately engaged in. I have thus far kept Him, as much out of my View, throughout the whole of my Discourse, as I possibly could. And I am pretty well persuaded that you who have been attentively engaged at the Time, you must certainly have observed that I have been most wonderfully supported through the whole of my present Exercise, even beyond my own Expectations; and I think, I may venture to say, far beyond most Part of yours. But as something is to be said on this moving Subject, and as none else can supply my Place at present, I shall still venture to proceed in the LORD's Strength.

I cannot bring Him back again; No! The Bands of Death cannot be loosed—The Gates of Death cannot be unbarred—The Decrees of Death cannot be reversed. I cannot therefore bring Him back again; I must soon go after Him, but he cannot return to me. I have many Times been extremely near to the Gates of Death, yea in some Instances, even to my own view, seemed to have passed almost through; and to the view of others, seemed actually to have made my Transit. But in all these Instances, the Soul must not have been entirely separated from the Body; and therefore in a little time it revived again. But this is not the Case with the dear Object of my present Discourse. He is gone, from whence He cannot return: and therefore I cannot bring Him back again. I have, moreover, thought many Times that I should have certainly been the first of the Family or Relatives, who would have passed out of this Life into another; but this has not been what the LORD saw meet. But there is one called upon for this Debt, full of Life, full of Bloom, full
of

of Youth, full of Health, and just coming up to the Prime of Age, Strength, and Vigour; but this is the *LORD's doing*, therefore it becomes us, who are left behind to say with the holy *Psalmist*, *We must be dumb and not open our Mouths, because the LORD hath done this.*

O! therefore my dear young Friends, remember and keep it constant in your View, that you have this Debt to pay, it will certainly be required; therefore be ye also ready to give in your Accounts. Our dear young Man was certainly well known to many of you, just of the same Age and Manners with yourselves, having the same Verdure of Youth, the same active Vivacity, and no Doubt, the same high towering Prospects of long Life, happy Connections, and prosperous Circumstances therein. But you see, that he is gone, his Prospects cut off, and his Expectations disappointed. How clearly then may you see, in this Instance, that *Man cometh forth like a Flower, and is suddenly cut down, that He fleeth like a shadow, and continueth not.*—Yea also, that *in the morning he seems to flourish and grow up, but in the Evening He is cut down and withereth.* The same Fate may perhaps be just waiting some of you, as has befallen Him: Let each, therefore be applying the sentence to himself, by saying, *LORD, is it I.*

My dear aged Friends, you certainly must know that the Time of your Departure draweth nigh. It is one of the Statute Laws of Heaven, as we have been hearing, which cannot be reversed; neither can the Time be prolonged. When you therefore see the blooming Youth called off, this ought surely to speak a loud Language to your Souls; therefore as the Scriptures exhort you, *be ye also ready.*

My Friends of Middle Age; who, no Doubt, may be healthy, strong, and vigorous, and therefore according to human View, no Prospect, at least, of any sudden Dissolution. And hence you may perhaps be putting the evil Day at a great Distance, looking forward with

Delight at the pleasing Circumstances, you may, at some little Time after, be placed in; and therefore contriving how you may bring all these distant Prospects into the fullest Enjoyment. But O, Friends, call into Mind a memorable Example of a poor deluded Soul, who seemingly was gratifying Himself with Views of the same Tendency, as just now hinted at, in *Luke xii. 16. &c.* And likewise remember what God *Himself* says, concerning this very Person, viz. *Thou Fool, this very Night thy Soul shall be required of Thee, &c.*

Therefore, O, my dear Friends, and Fellow-Mortals, let me earnestly intreat you to consider your latter End. To you O Friends, of whatever Age, of whatever Character, of whatever Description, this Counsel must be absolutely necessary. And this moreover ought peculiarly to be the Case, from the information given us in the Text, viz. That when any one of our Friends die, *They can by no Means be brought back again to us, We must go to Them, for they cannot return to us.* O therefore, let me again entreat you to make serious, solemn Heart-Work of your Religion. It is not enough that you be inoffensive to your Fellow-Creatures.—The LORD requires *that you shall love Him with your whole Heart.* It is not enough that you be free from disgraceful Impieties—*You must have a new Heart, and a right Spirit.* It is not enough that you may have a fair and unblemished Conversation—*You must be found in CHRIST JESUS, as a Member of that Body over which He is constituted the true Head.* There is no other Foundation on which you can build securely for the Welfare of your immortal Soul—There is no other strong Tower to which you can run for Refuge in the Hour of Nature's great Conflict.—Yea there is no other Ark in which you can effectually be saved in the great Day of Divine Visitation. But here is the *strong Hold* for all Prisoners of Hope—where Goodness and Mercy shall follow them all their Days, and they shall dwell in the House of their LORD, for ever and ever.—And where they

they shall behold his Face in all its shining Beauty, enjoy his Favor in its purest Streams, and be for ever satisfied with his infinite Fullness. To which happy State and Circumstances, may the LORD of Glory bring you all at last, where, we hope, our young Friend is already landed. Amen.

A COPY OF VERSES, (BY WAY OF SOLILOQUY)

Occasioned by the Death of (G. M. G.) a young Man, who departed this Life, in the *West-Indies*, on the 26th of April, 1794. Composed by his lamenting Aged Parent, between the Evening of the 11th, and the Morning of the 12th of September following.

1. **P**OSSESS'D of Health, and Bloom, and Youth,
I cross'd the foaming Deep;
Not Dreaming I should lay me down,
In foreign Climes to Sleep.
2. I little thought of this my Fate,
When leaving Britain's Shore;
That I should change my Life for Death,
And see my Friends no more.
3. In Hopes of Praise, of Skill, of Wealth,
Preferment too in View;
But Providence had other Ends
To answer—which He knew.
4. Engag'd in King, and Country's Cause,
I've yielded up my Breath;
In saving other Lives from Wreck,
My own's cut short by Death.
5. No Parent's Hand, nor Bosom dear
Supports my drooping Head,
When I am call'd to leave this Clay,
And lie among the Dead.
6. No Mother, Sister, Female near,
To close my lifeless Eyes,
When my immortal Soul must fly,
To yonder distant Skies.

7. Though

7. Though *Friends* be far, yet *God* is near,
And makes his own his Care;
And sends their guardian *Angels* down,
To waft Them through the Air.
8. My younger *Friends*, who yet remain,
Nor much of Time have spent,
Let Wisdom and Religion's Laws
Be your's the Employment.
9. My Aged *Friends*, who still survive,
Yet tott'ring near the Grave,
Give Diligence, while Time shall last,
Your deathless Souls to save.
10. Farewell, *dear Friends*, a long Farewell,
For I am gone before,
To my long Home, of Life bereft,
New Mansions to explore.
11. The Way I've gone remains for you,
It cannot be repast;
Therefore prepare to follow me,
That we may meet at last.
12. Fight that good Fight of Faith and Love,
Before your Life's laid down,
That so you may from *CHRIST's* own Hand,
Receive that Heavenly Crown.
13. Happy the Soul, in *CHRIST* who lives,
And in his *SAVIOUR* dies,
He lives for ever with his *LORD*,
In endless Bless and Joys.
14. Grant this, *dear LORD*, to all my *Friends*,
Who yet in Life are spar'd,
That when They're gone, as I am now,
They be for Heav'n prepar'd.
15. O *Friends*, serve *God*, with all your Might,
Be diligent Below,
Then sweetest Scenes of heavenly Bliss,
Hereafter you shall know.

Amen.

The

The following COPY of VERSES,

*Was Composed, for the most Part, by the same Author, in
Order to fill up the vacant Pages.*

1. **G** EORGE is gone, this Life for ever fled,
Hath put immortal on, his Body dead;
Soon Death's cold Hand hath seiz'd his blooming Form,
And made his Flesh Repasts unto the Worm.
2. Ye Youths approach, the solemn Scene Survey,
He, once like you, was lovely, fair and gay;
Now all his Bloom is gone, his Beauty fled,
And He Himself lies number'd with the Dead.
3. So when you fade, as surely fade ye must,
And your fair Forms be humbl'd to the Dust;
Then will your Eyes be clos'd, your Voices fail,
Each Limb turn livid, and each Cheek be pale.
4. Then your cold Clay beneath the Earth be thrown,
Soon be forgotten, and no more be known;
How lov'd, how honor'd once, avails not here,
The abject Beggar equals with the Peer.
5. Ah cruel Ravager! halt thou begun,
To seize our youthful Friends, must G---be ore,
He be the First that feels thy fatal Stroke?
And must the Bands of Friendship thus be broke?
6. Say pale Destroyer, ghastly Monster say,
Who gave Thee Right to take our Friend away?
Alas! 'twas Sin, 'twas Sin that direful Foe,
Parent of Evil, fruitful Source of Woe.
7. As Death amidst the horrid Train moves on,
An hideous Form, and Cause of Pain and Moan;
On every Side his fatal Darts are hurl'd,
Spreading Destruction thro' a sinful World.
8. One of our Friends, alas! is gone, and I
Must very soon the dismal Combat try;
Prepare my Soul, prepare to meet the Foe,
Lest I be unprepar'd, when I must go.

9. These

9. These nimble Limbs of mine will move no more,
 These Eyes will soon be clos'd, this Life be o'er;
 How vain is Life! at best like Morning's dawn,
 'Twixt Death and us how slight a Curtain's drawn.
10. Behold, review, the Path that Mortals tread,
 Down to the gloomy Regions of the Dead;
 Nor will the transient hurrying Moments Stay,
 Nor can we measure back the dreary Way.
11. Our dearest Friends, and our best Kindred go,
 Thro' Death's cold Arms, a Way, which none here
 know;
 Feeble as Theirs, our tott'ring mortal Frame,
 The Way, the House, and End must be the same.
12. Death comes and takes the tott'ring Fabrick down,
 While on his Brow He wears a direful Frown;
 Deaf to rich Bribes, with Wealth cannot be woo'd,
 He hath a Power too great to be withstood.
13. Indulgent God! when this dissolving Frame
 Shall fall and sink in Death; that awful Claim
 Receive our Souls in thy Divine Embrace,
 Let endless Glory crown thy Work of Grace.
14. We then shall God, and Friends, and Heaven see,
 When cloth'd with endless Immortality,
 In Heaven where Splendor fills the happy Plains,
 Where in full Glory our *Immanuel* reigns.
15. Ten thousand, thousand tuneful Voices raise,
 Their sweetest, loftiest Notes to sing his Praise;
 Great God! awake our Hope, our Love, our Joy,
 'Till Heaven alone our raptur'd Souls employ.

THE END.

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